

Abstract 209

TITLE: A Collaboration between Orange County Health Department and Orange County Public Schools to Implement a School Based Theatrical Production to Address At-Risk Behavior

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ISSUE: Implementing cutting edge risk reduction activities within Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) is challenging, as there are strict guidelines when addressing sex-related topics. Any topics addressing sex related issues are discussed primarily in the Life Management Skill course. However, non-Life Management Skill students participating in such discussions in a school setting are the exception.

SETTING: Since 1987, Health Education Risk Reduction Coordinator has been conducting risk reduction presentations within the Orange County Public School system as an approved speaker. Additional issues multiple issues and make it interesting for the students. As mention previously, OCPS has very stringent guidelines when sex related issues are addressed in the school setting. Parents are notified in advance of the presentation and are further advised that students will be excused from discussions at the parent 's request.

PROJECT: Orange County Health Department (OCHD) established a partnership with OCPS, Human Sexuality department, which approves all speakers and materials that address sex related materials; and the Performing Artist Carp, a non-profit acting company that tours correctional facilities and nursing homes. A 40-minute written by KT Cm-ran was selected because it dealt with such issues as teen pregnancy, date rape, HIV, substance abuse, peer pressure and sexually transmitted diseases. Actors were selected and the play was presented at two local high school freshman campuses. Additional requests from other high schools have been received. This presentation will include a brief vignette of the play by student actors.

RESULTS: Approximately 500 students attended the production over three days. Favorable feedback has been received from both students and administration as indicated on surveys from the students. This data is being used to justify the continuation of this project and future plays.

LESSONS LEARNED: A set of questions was developed by OCPS to address issues in the play. The partnership decided that teachers should take the leading role in discussions as they will be available for follow-up and can make appropriate referrals.

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